

# Security of the Western Alliance

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*Following is an address by Secretary Vance which was delivered by Assistant Secretary for European Affairs George S. Vest before the Berlin Press Association in Berlin on December 10, 1979.*

I want to begin by expressing Secretary Vance's keen regret that the pressure of events makes it impossible for him to be here tonight. The continuing situation in Iran has required that he make some urgent changes in his travel plans—a fact which he regrets, and which he and I hope you will understand. He has asked, therefore, that I convey to you his greetings, and that I stress to you this point: That every word I speak tonight should be accepted as his—and attributed to him.

An invitation to address the Berlin Press Association is itself an honor. Some lines of Goethe go this way: "He only earns his freedom and existence, who daily conquers them anew."

Each day, the press corps of this city expresses anew the truth of those lines by upholding the principles of a free and open press. You help us understand the profound changes taking place about us; and you help defend the right of citizens to participate in decisions which affect their lives and well-being.

This gathering affords an opportunity also to express, once again, the admiration that millions of Americans feel for Berlin and its people—and the abiding commitment of our Nation to this city. President Carter, who remembers with great warmth his visit

to Berlin last year, has asked that his personal greetings be conveyed to you, along with his assurance that the United States is steadfast in this commitment.

For 35 years, Berlin has been a symbol for free people everywhere. In the postwar period of tension and confrontation, Berlin became a stirring example of human determination to be free—to live under democratic institutions. It is this unyielding determination which helped create the balance upon which Berlin's current stability is based. The clear demonstration that Berlin would not yield, that Berliners wished to remain part of the Western world, made possible the Quadripartite Agreement.

And in the years since the Quadripartite Agreement, Berlin has been an impressive symbol of the tangible fruits detente can yield.

For the United States, the freedom of Berlin and protection of the benefits made possible by the Quadripartite Agreement are central foreign policy objectives. We will use every means at our disposal to guarantee the safety and the freedom of this city.

Moreover, we are committed to further easing tensions in Berlin through the opportunities provided by the Quadripartite Agreement. Full realization of these opportunities will benefit both East and West. Strict observance and full implementation of all aspects of the Quadripartite Agreement will make such progress possible.

It is essential to maintain the delicate balance of interests which has developed in and around the city. There should be no temptation to use Berlin as a point of pressure in reaction to developments in other areas of East-West relations. There should be no questioning the important ties between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Western sectors of Berlin to which the United States attaches particular importance.

Perhaps most importantly, there should be no questioning of Four Power rights and responsibilities for Berlin as a whole. These remain the basis for the stable situation which has developed in this city. The United States is determined to maintain Four Power rights and responsibilities for Berlin as a whole. We expect the agreement, and the practices and procedures which have arisen from it, to be strictly honored.

There is yet another reason to welcome this forum: for it affords us the opportunity to discuss an issue of vital concern to the people of Berlin and to us all—the security of our Western alliance.

Berliners know, better than most, that true security—what John F. Kennedy called “the survival and success of liberty”—cannot be bought with arms alone. The security of the West depends ultimately upon the vitality and the appeal of free political systems; upon the health of our economies; upon the ability of the Western democracies to cooperate with one another. Our goal is not only to defend ourselves; it is to build and maintain a way of life worth defending.

Nonetheless—as Berliners also know—it would be folly to neglect the military aspects of security. Indeed, one of the stern lessons of the past three decades is that we make detente possible through strength, not weakness. In a perfect world this would not be true; in the real world it is inescapable.

So let us focus tonight on the issue of military security—in both its defense and arms control aspects. The subject is especially timely now. For the NATO allies are reaching at this moment a number of decisions—decisions which will shape the security of Europe in the 1980s and deeply influence relations between East and West. Such decisions, as you know, will be the chief concern of the NATO ministers when they meet in Brussels later this week.

One of these decisions involves a fundamental question which confronts

NATO members and indeed all of the West: How should the alliance respond to the Soviet Union's unprecedented buildup of long-range theater nuclear forces targeted against Western Europe?

### **Deterrence and Arms Control**

We will be answering that question in Brussels this week in a way which emphasizes two essential points:

- We stand ready to adjust force levels through concrete arms-control negotiations. Our hope is that such negotiations will limit force levels on both sides. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations should understand that we have a genuine commitment to seek mutual arms limitations in strategic, theater nuclear, and conventional arms.

- NATO is determined, however—and this is the second essential point—to maintain secure deterrent forces across the entire nuclear and conventional spectrum. This the Soviets must also understand.

This dual policy—a policy of maintaining deterrence and of pursuing arms control—will be at the heart of NATO's strategy in the 1980s. For it is self-evident to us that adequate defenses and arms control must go hand-in-hand. Arms control agreements hold out the hope of affording greater security than arms competition with its high costs and built-in dangers. But only a strong defense, including prudent measures to modernize our forces, can remove any doubts about our resolve—doubts which themselves would make genuine arms limitations less likely.

Let me explain how this dual policy will manifest itself in our decisions in the coming decade—decisions concerning strategic, theater nuclear, and conventional forces.

### **Balance of Strategic Forces**

Strategic nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union is, and will remain, a central fact of international security. Efforts by either side to resist this central fact, or to evade it, will inevitably threaten the world's stability and security—for neither side will allow the other to attain superiority.

Over the past decade, the Soviet Union has steadily increased its strategic capabilities. Without new investments on our part in our strategic forces, this Soviet momentum could

jeopardize a stable balance at the strategic level. So we are making those investments in each leg of our strategic triad:

- We are developing advanced cruise missiles for our B-52 bombers.

- We are now deploying the new Trident I missile in some existing submarines, and by 1981 we will be deploying the new Trident submarine.

- And we are moving forward with the MX missile program to assure the survivability of our land-based strategic missiles.

These improvements represent the most vigorous American strategic weapons program in more than a decade.

Our purpose in these efforts is not only to maintain essential equivalence in strategic forces; it is also to maintain flexibility in our strategic nuclear options. For, while we accept the idea that mutual vulnerability is a deterrent to war, we do not accept the notion that our options should be limited to mutual assured destruction. We must have in our strategic quiver more than the single arrow of Armageddon.

It is both our policy and our practice, therefore, to maintain a variety of strategic forces, capable of absorbing the heaviest blows possible and still retaining the power to retaliate against the entire spectrum of military and economic targets. We refuse to lock ourselves into either of two doctrines: the doctrine of reliance on massive retaliation alone or a doctrine which emphasizes so-called “limited” nuclear exchanges directed by each side against the other's strategic forces.

There must be a deliberate uncertainty about precisely what our response to attack might be—for that very uncertainty strengthens deterrence. Our doctrine of flexible response and our wide-range of strategic forces preserve that uncertainty.

We will maintain a secure strategic balance and a credible deterrent at whatever level of effort is required. But we know that there can be no ultimate security in relentless escalations of strategic power. Both we and the Soviet Union have a compelling national interest in stabilizing the strategic competition, and achieving balanced reductions, through negotiation.

The SALT process demonstrably serves these ends. And SALT provides a striking illustration of the dual approach I have described—the mutual

reinforcement of arms control and force modernization. For it is clear that authentic arms control progress would not be possible without our determination to maintain the balance in any environment—whether with arms control or without it. But it is clear, as well, that in a nuclear age true security will elude us unless we are equally determined in our diplomacy—in the search for dependable and balanced controls on nuclear arms.

The SALT II Treaty is now before the U.S. Senate. It is my hope and belief that it will be ratified in the near future. Once that step is taken, the agreed goal of SALT III will be to achieve substantial reductions in nuclear arsenals.

Throughout this process we have benefited from consultations with our European allies; we assured that European security interests and options are fully protected. In the next phase, SALT III, those consultations will be even more intense; the role of the allies in shaping our approach will be even more direct, as the talks take up issues of long-range theater as well as strategic forces.

But the same central principles will guide us: a commitment to have whatever arms we need to maintain the balance, while we press for progressively more stringent mutual limits through negotiations.

### Theater Nuclear Forces

Maintaining stability and deterrence is important not only in the field of intercontinental strategic weapons, but at the theater nuclear level as well. Indeed, the emergence of parity in these strategic systems focuses attention on NATO's long-range theater nuclear forces as a stone in the arch of deterrence.

For many years, NATO's European allies have had the assurance that the threat posed to Western Europe by Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces is ultimately deterred by the intercontinental nuclear striking power of the United States. That assurance is undiminished. Our strategic nuclear forces would be used if necessary for Europe's defense. The vital interests of the United States are so engaged in Europe, our commitments so deep, and our ties so strong that it could not be otherwise.

But NATO's chief aim is to prevent aggression. We must therefore be sure that no problem arises with regard to Soviet perceptions; for it is on those

perceptions that deterrence rests. It is crucial that the Soviets not be tempted to believe—however wrongly—that strategic parity between the superpowers means that Europe's defense could be separated from that of the United States, or that the Soviet Union itself could remain immune from a military conflict in Europe. Thus, deterrence requires that NATO have a full range of capabilities to respond to any level of military challenge. It requires that there be no gap in this continuum of forces: that every stone in the arch of deterrence be sound.

Such a gap could emerge if we should fail to modernize NATO's long-range theater nuclear forces. For the Soviet Union, having achieved strategic parity, appears now to be driving toward nuclear preponderance in the European theater.

We can see the evidence in the Soviet Union's vigorous program to modernize and expand its long-range theater nuclear forces. The most dramatic development in this regard—and the matter of greatest concern to us—is the rapid, ongoing Soviet deployment of the SS-20 mobile missile.

Let us make no mistake: The SS-20 is not an upgrading of an old system. It is an entirely new system—the first mobile, land-based, long-range missile system in the European theater. Each SS-20 launcher can reload and refire. Each missile can deliver not one, but three nuclear warheads. The SS-20 can reach everywhere in Europe from bases deep within Soviet territory.

Add to the SS-20 system the growing numbers of Backfire bombers deployed in the European theater and the conclusion is inescapable: This Soviet buildup goes beyond what is necessary to upgrade their armaments or to meet developments in NATO's forces. Yet Soviet spokesmen tell us that any moves by NATO to redress this situation could undermine detente and launch a new period of East-West tensions in Europe. They have insisted that we accept, in the name of detente, a trend toward manifest inequality.

The West cannot be passive in this situation. From a political standpoint, to do so would constitute a curious approach to detente. It would say to the world that Western security decisions are the business of both East and West, but that those of the East are for Moscow to make alone. For the West to acquiesce in such a notion could tempt Moscow to risk other kinds of pressure on other issues. I need not remind this audience how gravely this would undermine the only sensible

basis for cooperation between East and West—the principle of mutual security.

So it is essential for the United States and the NATO allies to maintain deterrence across the whole military spectrum. This week in Brussels, therefore, the NATO defense and foreign ministers will decide upon a set of proposals providing for theater nuclear modernization and arms control. In this connection, let me say that the staunchness of the German Government and Chancellor Schmidt and the resolution passed here in Berlin last week by the Social Democratic Party Congress are far-sighted contributions which will add to the unity and determination of the alliance as we meet in Brussels.

The pending modernization proposals call for deployment by NATO in Western Europe of long-range theater nuclear weapons—a mix of land-based cruise and ballistic missiles. By replacing aging long-range theater nuclear systems with highly survivable and more capable systems, the deployments will reduce the chance that the Soviet Union might perceive, however incorrectly, a gap in NATO's spectrum of deterrence. And by improving NATO's deterrent posture, they will raise the most significant threshold—that between peace and war.

This deployment will permit NATO to reduce its overall nuclear stockpile in Europe as part of the rationalization of its theater nuclear forces. And it will signal to the Soviet Union that its buildup promises no real military or political advantages—because NATO will respond to the challenge.

At the same time, we firmly believe that our security can be enhanced through genuine arms control, through concrete agreements to regulate force levels. Such agreements hold the promise of preventing unrestrained competition and providing greater stability in the theater nuclear field.

But arms limitation cannot be unilateral; it must be achieved through a process that is truly mutual. Because we are committed to seeking genuine arms control, our modernization decisions will be coupled with an important arms limitation offer: an offer aimed at limiting long-range theater nuclear forces on both sides. NATO's proposal will call for verifiable limits that are significant and based upon the principle of equality.

This arms control initiative will test the sincerity of the Soviets on limiting



these systems. Since the first NATO systems will not be fielded until 1983, there will be ample time to pursue serious arms control negotiations.

There are those, I know, who argue that NATO should delay its deployment decision until such talks can be held. We must not delay for two important reasons:

**First**, we cannot know in advance that such talks will succeed. It would make little sense for the allies to fall farther and farther behind in the mere hope that the talks might succeed. And given the present momentum of Soviet efforts, any delay in NATO modernization increases an already troubling disparity.

**Second**, the West must demonstrate its seriousness about modernization, or the Soviets will have no visible incentive to negotiate reductions in forces.

So our position is clear: The United States and the NATO allies will strive to reduce forces through negotiations. But we will do all that is necessary to maintain a credible deterrent across the entire spectrum of nuclear and conventional forces. We cannot, however, accept unilateral restraint by NATO as a prerequisite to negotiations; and we will not. The restraint must come from both sides.

### Balance of Conventional Forces

The policy I have described—a policy of maintaining deterrence by force improvements where necessary and by arms control where possible—is also our strategy in the field of conventional forces.

Because improvements in Soviet conventional forces continue, and because conventional forces are central to the alliance's deterrent, it is essential that the allies hold to their comprehensive modernization program. NATO's Long-Term Defense Program will assure us a modern, better integrated and more effective conventional force for the 1980s. The NATO goal of 3% real annual increases in member defense spending will provide the resources essential to finance these improvements in conventional forces—which consume the largest share of defense budgets.

But here again, we are determined both to maintain deterrence and to neglect no opportunity for progress in arms limitation. One significant opportunity for progress lies in the mutual and balanced force reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna. Here our hope

is to give practical meaning to the concept of balance in the conventional field just as the SALT process has sought to do in the strategic field.

The goal of the MBFR talks—a goal now accepted by both sides—is to negotiate common collective ceilings at lower levels for NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe. But progress toward that goal has been hobbled by Eastern unwillingness to resolve the data issue. There is still a very large discrepancy between the figures provided by East and West regarding the level of Eastern forces in the area.

Let me reaffirm today that the Western side is eager to make progress toward agreement—progress which can come only if such basic issues as the data problem and verification methods can be resolved.

The announcement by Chairman Brezhnev of a Soviet withdrawal of up to 20,000 troops, 1,000 tanks and some other equipment is a positive step. However, the basic issues of the MBFR negotiations must still be resolved.

Progress toward greater stability and mutual confidence in Europe can also come through the effort to implement the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in 1975 by 35 nations at Helsinki. The Final Act is an historic document, for it transcends normal state-to-state relations to deal with concrete problems that have divided East and West. Compliance with its obligations would enrich the lives of people and ease the tensions between East and West.

The Final Act offers a potential framework for reducing military tensions in Europe and building greater confidence with respect to military activities. There have been a number of suggestions that this objective could be advanced through a meeting of the CSCE states to deal with security issues. The Government of France has put forward a useful proposal in this regard.

Clearly such a meeting would only make sense, however, as part of a balanced and healthy CSCE process. Thus it is important, first, to conclude successfully the review in Madrid. As we approach that meeting, the United States will keep in mind, above all, the importance of implementing all the provisions of the Final Act—not just the security provisions. We are particularly concerned about the provisions dealing with humanitarian issues that directly affect the daily lives

of our citizens and those elsewhere in Europe.

We will work to insure that the discussions in Madrid take place in a constructive atmosphere, free of polemics. But we will not avoid providing an honest assessment of problems simply to project a positive image.

### Conclusion

The realities of military security I have discussed—and the opportunities for progress in arms limitation—argue for a special attitude on the part of the allies as we face the 1980s: An attitude I would describe as sober optimism. We must be sobered by the prospect that deep and fundamental differences will persist between East and West—differences rooted in geography, in history, and in the assumptions underlying our political systems. Neither our differences nor our weapons systems will be dismantled overnight. So we would do well to keep ourselves free of illusions based solely on hope.

But we should never abandon hope. For in spite of our historic differences, East and West have come a long way in their relations. The range of contacts among the countries of Eastern and Western Europe has broadened; their relations have taken on an increasing air of normality. Clearly, the future of East-West relations will be marked by deep differences. But we should at the same time seek to broaden the areas of cooperation between us. Neither prospect should unsettle us in the West. For we bring to the future an impressive record of achievements and an equally impressive array of strengths.

- For almost 31 years, the deterrent shield of the NATO alliance has worked successfully.

- The economies of the Western alliance are more than three times as productive as those of the Warsaw Pact.

- Our societies are free and open, hospitable to innovation and creativity, unafraid of change.

Though we cannot dominate events in our world, our power is immense to influence those events, and to shape them in ways that improve the prospects for humanity.

If we preserve these strengths and build upon them; if in the future we find

within ourselves the same qualities of statesmanship we have always found, we need not fear the 1980s or the decades beyond. We will be strong—strong enough to protect ourselves and strong enough, if our adversaries are also willing, to cooperate in pursuit of peace.

Indeed, just as we will do whatever necessary to maintain stability and deterrence in Europe, so are we deeply committed to a relaxation of tensions between East and West. We stand ready to propose and consider new ideas; to follow unconventional paths; to respond to every sign of good faith from the other side. For we want to build a future in which the peace of Europe,

East and West, is never again disturbed.

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